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On Resuscitating the Decalogue

"OF Law," said Hooker, "there can be no less acknowledged, than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world: all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power: both Angels and men and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy." "See we not plainly," he asked, "that obedience of creatures unto the law of nature is the stay of the whole world?"[1]

What will here be in question is the obedience only of *human* creatures to the law of God or of nature. For, as Bishop Berkeley said, "we ought to distinguish a twofold signification of the terms *law of nature*; which words do either denote a rule or precept for the direction of the voluntary actions of reasonable agents, and in that sense they imply a duty: or else they are used to signify any general rule which we observe to obtain in the works of nature, independent of the wills of men; in which sense no duty is implied."[2] It is only with the former signification that we shall be concerned.

According to *The Catechism for all Schoolmasters to Teach*, which was set forth in 1553, "the law of nature . . . was engraffed by God in the nature of men, while nature was yet sound and uncorrupted. But after the entrance of sin, although the wise were somewhat after a sort not utterly ignorant of that light of nature; yet it was by that time so hid from the greatest part of men, that they scant perceived any shadow thereof."[3] Opinions differed then—and they differ still—as to how far men, left to themselves, are in the dark, but it was traditionally agreed that God had met man's more or less dark condition by revealing at Sinai the fundamental precepts of the law of nature.

As the result of that revelation and its sequels, men, or at any rate English men, were no longer in the dark. "The laws of God," wrote one of our English Reformers in 1548, "were never more plentifully nor more plainly set forth amongst any other people, than they be amongst us. The commandments of God are continually, in the ears of all the people, read openly in the churches, yea, written upon the walls, so that all men may know them."[4] And about twenty years later, in a work commended by Convocation, we may read that "the ten commandments are the very absolute and everlasting rule of true righteousness and all virtues, set down for all places, men, and ages, to frame themselves by."[5]

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[1] *Eccl. Pol.*, I. xvi. 8; I. iii. 2. [2] *Passive Obedience*, §33.
[3] See *Liturgies of K. Edward VI* (Parker Soc.), p. 499.
[4] *The Writings of John Bradford* (Parker Soc.), i. 9.
[5] Bullinger, *Decades*, II. ii.

The ten commandments were not regarded only as providing direction for personal conduct, or as laying down the foundations of ecclesiastical law; but they were regarded as providing the basis of the law of England, and of course of other nations too. Blackstone begins his *Analysis of the Laws of England* (1756) with these statements: "1. Law is a Rule of Action, prescribed by a Superior Power. 2. Natural Law is the Rule of *human* action prescribed by the Creator, and discoverable by the Light of Reason. 3. The *divine*, or *revealed* Law, considered as a Rule of Action, is also the Law of Nature implanted by God himself." And in his *Commentaries* he said that the laws of God are superior in obligation to all other laws; that no human laws should be suffered to contradict them; that human laws are of no validity if contrary to them; and that all laws derive their force from that divine original.[1]

It is true that this doctrine has been tacitly abandoned or superseded since the triumph of the Austinian conception of sovereignty. An Englishman who now appealed against a law passed by Parliament to the law of nature or the ten commandments would receive short shrift. The very idea would be scouted; indeed it has been described by a judge as not law but rhetoric.[2] It is not only in Nazidom that the traditional basis and sanction of civil law have disappeared or have ceased to be taken seriously.

The question concerning the ultimate ground of civil law and of public morality is, however, beginning again to receive some of the attention that is due to it. Several recent writings have canvassed the authority of the law of nature; and during the past year I have noticed more than private attempts on the part of Christians to resuscitate the decalogue. In our own country the Religious Director of the B.B.C. has given a series of broadcast talks on the ten commandments, in which he describes them as "the foundation of any enduring society."[3] Again, the Pope took as the subject of his Lenten Allocution last year "The Observation of the Lord's Commandments," and he discussed the decalogue in some detail.[4] The Roman Catholic Bishops in Germany have issued a long joint pastoral letter which is entirely devoted to an exposition of the ten commandments.[5] And, still more recently, the Protestant Confessional Church in Germany has issued a shorter statement which covers the same ground.[6]

Since Germany still appears to set the pace in the development not only of military technology, but also of militant theology, we may take these circumstances as an indication that we may hear a good deal more about the decalogue in the near future than we have done for some time. And indeed, if it really has the authority that both Catholic and Protestant divinity have in the past assigned to it, it is high time that we did hear much more about it. But are there not formidable difficulties in the way of a resuscitation of the decalogue in the twentieth century, difficulties which those who desire such an event ought

[1] See Austin, *Jurisprudence*[3] (1869), p. 220.
[2] See Sir H. H. Slesser, *The Judicial Office* (1943), p. 129; cp. pp. 35, 148 *f.*
[3] J. W. Welch, *The Ten Commandments* (Collins, 1944).
[4] See *The Tablet*, March 4, 1944. [5] See *The Tablet*, May 13, 20 and 27, 1944.
[6] See *The Spiritual Issues of the War*, October 19, 1944.

to consider carefully, lest they embark on the enterprise too confidently?

First, the place of the ten commandments in the Christian tradition is much less obvious than those who are acquainted only with its medieval or post-Reformation manifestations realize.[1] It is a remarkable and a surprising fact that it was not until about the thirteenth century that the decalogue was joined to the Creed and the Lord's Prayer as part of the regular instruction of all Christians, and references to it in the Fathers are few and far between. Before we resuscitate the decalogue, it may be worth while to inquire what served its purpose as a guide to conduct and as a compendium of instruction in the first twelve centuries of Christian history, and to make sure that the prominence subsequently given to it was a mark of progress.

Secondly, there is not a uniform tradition in the historic Churches as to what the ten commandments are.[2] One tradition is followed by the Greek, the Anglican and the Reformed Churches, and another by the Roman Catholic and the Lutheran Churches; and both of these differ from the Jewish tradition. There are differences not only about the enumeration and composition of the ten commandments, but also about the division of them into two tables. This may seem a trivial matter and only of archæological interest, but it was at one time debated with much rancour and might be again. It will be well for those who propose to resuscitate the decalogue to attend to this question in advance, lest too late they find that they have done no more than resurrect a distracting theological controversy.

But these difficulties, which a contemplation of ecclesiastical tradition suggests, may be slight when compared with the difficulties that now occur when we view the facts about the decalogue in the Bible. It will be impossible, except for the ignorant or the innocent, to revive the simple belief of our forefathers that the ten commandments were uttered by the voice, and written with the finger, of God. When that belief prevailed, it must have been comparatively easy to convince men that "the ten commandments are the very absolute and everlasting rule of true righteousness and all virtues, set down for all places, men, and ages."

I need only recall the considerations which anyone who exposes himself to the literary and historical evidences must now take into account. The fact that there are, in the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy, two versions of the decalogue, which differ from one another, shows that both cannot be original and authentic, since we shall hardly credit the far-fetched hypothesis of a Jewish rabbi that the Lord uttered both versions simultaneously by a miraculous operation.

There are indeed strong reasons for supposing that neither version is original, and that behind both there lies an earlier version which was approximately what we know as the ten commandments in their shortened form. The supposition that *this* was the original decalogue, delivered to Moses at Sinai, is attractive, and congenial to the conservative bias of many British scholars; but it must be confessed that it

[1] See C. Gore, *Dominant Ideas and Corrective Principles* (1918), ch. vi.
[2] For the facts see, *e.g.*, *H.D.B.*, I. 581 *f.*

is dubious. The literary and historical evidences are, to say the least, equally well explained by the hypothesis that the shorter form of the present decalogue originated at a much later date in the history of Israel, though there may have been an earlier decalogue, consisting of different commandments, which went back to the time of Moses.

It seems then that those who propose to resuscitate the decalogue ought not to make the assertion of its divine authority dependent on any precise theory or tradition as to its historical origin. I say "precise," because it would be quite as much a mistake to treat the decalogue as a pure embodiment of timeless absolutes which might have fallen from the skies at any time. The decalogue is an outcome of God's dealings with His chosen people in the history to which the Old Testament bears witness. It can rightly be regarded as a summary, or as the chapter-headings, of the law which He revealed to them during the whole period when He was making His will known to them. As Philo said, "the Ten Words are summaries (κεφάλαια) of the special laws which are recorded in the Sacred Books and run through the whole of the legislation."[1] But we are now aware that God made His law known in ways more delicate and by degrees more protracted than our forefathers supposed. The divine authority of the decalogue should therefore be made to rest not on the inconsistent records of what happened at Sinai, but on the consistent testimony of the whole Scriptures. For it is of course of decisive importance that the divine authority of the decalogue is presupposed and reaffirmed in the New Testament. Christian expositors can never be at liberty to treat the ten commandments as a dead letter, though they are bound to take into account the ways in which their meaning is both extended and limited in the New Testament.[2]

The New Testament does not contain a systematic description of the place of the Mosaic law in the divine economy (that is not its manner); but what it implies seems to be justly interpreted in the traditional doctrine which distinguishes between the ceremonial and judicial precepts, on the one hand, and the moral commandments, on the other. This doctrine is stated in the Seventh Article of Religion: "Although the Law given from God by Moses, as touching Ceremonies and Rites, do not bind Christian men, nor the Civil precepts thereof ought of necessity to be received in any commonwealth; yet notwithstanding, no Christian man whatsoever is free from the obedience of the Commandments which are called Moral." ("Moral," that is, as opposed to "positive" or "instituted" laws.[3])

On any showing the precepts of the decalogue are in this sense moral, with the exception of the second and fourth commandments, which are positive and ceremonial as well as moral. These commandments indeed have the effect of checking facile generalizations about the permanent, plain and universal obligation of the decalogue,[4] and they

[1] *De Decalogo*, xxix. [2] Cp. Jeremy Taylor, *Ductor Dubitantium*, II. 2, §4.

[3] "By *Moral Law* is to be understood, in opposition to *Positive*, a law which has an antecedent foundation in the nature of things, that arises from eternal reason, is suitable to the frame and powers of our souls, and is necessary for maintaining of human society." Burnet on Art. vii.

[4] A Theology Occasional Paper by R. P. MacDermott on "The Anglican Interpretation of the Fourth Commandment" is in the press.

call our attention to a still more formidable difficulty—the problem of relativity or "the scandal of particularity" as it is sometimes called.

For it may be granted that the decalogue was divinely revealed to Israel and was admirably adapted to the circumstances of that particular people, but for that very reason it may be denied that it can be strictly applied to all peoples and all times. Was not the form of the decalogue determined by the needs of ancient Judaism—that is, by the conditions of an agricultural society, and by the state of social and religious development that had then been reached? Will not its aptness to the conditions that existed at the time of its first promulgation be the measure of its inaptness as a universal law? Have not the Christians had to resort to strange subterfuges in order to overcome this difficulty—for instance, in their interpretation of the second commandment concerning the carving of images as well as in their handling of Sabbath observance?

This problem is raised by the whole of the divine revelation, to which the Bible bears testimony, and we must candidly admit that traditional theology has not faced it satisfactorily, while for the moderns what was at first thought to be a relief is now more like a dilemma. The God in whom we believe has made Himself and His will known to His people, not in some abstract, ideal or doctrinaire manner,[1] but by addressing and dealing with particular men or a particular people in actual historical situations. This is to say that there is a contingent element in all divine revelation, and this is true of the incarnation of the Eternal Word of God Himself. Thus in the case of the decalogue the promulgation of the law of God has been conditioned by the peculiarities of the Hebrew language as well as by the temporal circumstances of the Hebrew people. As the recently published Report of the Archbishop's Commission on *Dispensation* says, "When God inspires men to express His will in legislation, He submits Himself to the limitations of human language and human foresight" (p. 113).

It follows that the decalogue can be rightly treated as the fundamental divine law for all peoples and times only if it is interpreted by the method of analogy. The Church has the responsibility of looking not only at the divine revelation in the Bible but also at the ever-changing state of human society, and of expounding the divine law with a corresponding change of emphasis and with fresh illustrations. In some cases the requirement of a commandment in one age may be in apparent contradiction to what it requires in another age. For example, the eighth commandment, which concerns the right of property, may in one age require a nation to defend the private ownership of certain kinds of property, which in another age ought by the same canon to be publicly owned. Such a change of interpretation will be the result not of a more correct exegesis of Scripture but of a more realistic appreciation of contemporary facts.

But if the decalogue is thus subject to changing interpretation, why continue to give it such prominence? Why should not the Church

[1] "It is the highest wisdom not to enact a code abstractedly the best, but one which will best suit the circumstances and capabilities of a people." J. D. Macbride, *Lectures on the Articles* (1853), p. 206.

produce in every age a new set of basic commandments which are plainly pertinent to existing conditions? The reasons for desiring a resuscitation of the decalogue, at least in its shorter form, and provided the difficulties I have mentioned are taken into account, may be summarized as follows:

By publicly acknowledging this venerable summary of the revealed law of nature a Church and a nation remind themselves that above all the changes and chances of historical development there is a God who does not change, who is the author of man's existence and of the law in obedience to which alone, like the rest of the creation, men can find peace and joy. The decalogue consists only of chapter headings; every Church and nation is bound to work away at writing out and rewriting the chapters from generation to generation. The ten commandments prescribe for all peoples and times the direction of these essays. They require us to take the whole range of our common life as the sphere in which we are bound to obey God, instead of attending only to those matters which immediate interest or fashionable preoccupation dictates. They warn us that in the long run we cannot serve the neighbour aright without serving the God of Israel aright, and *vice versa*, and that the rights of God and the rights of man are for ever correlative; in a word, that there is a point in the old Jewish legend that the two tables of the law came from one block of stone, and if fitted together they made a perfect cube. There is a recurring temptation for a Church or a nation to try to obey one table while treating the other as of secondary importance. Religious people may be so concerned about the worship of God and ecclesiastical piety that they overlook the fact that God equally demands social justice, whereas social reformers are inclined to neglect the righteous and living God who alone can give them the authority and the humility that they need, and who alone can prevent their work from producing another harvest of evil.

The decalogue is a warning to the whole world that public infidelity and public immorality are equally damnable, and that either is eventually fatal to the health of human society. In the end we shall come to see—though it does not yet appear how we shall be brought to see—that it is impertinent for us to talk about resuscitating, or even about reconstructing, the decalogue, as though we were its masters and not its subjects. As Mark Rutherford said: "We may reconstruct the Decalogue, but if the Almighty has settled that men and women, if they choose to exist, are to be governed by it, our reconstruction will end in disaster."[1]

A. R. Vidler.

Hawarden.

Oliver Quick as a Theologian—II

Quick's powers of analytical and synthetic thinking are most impressive in his treatment of the whole subject of redemption, which receives its final word in *The Gospel of the New World*. There is no looseness of thought in this survey, which begins with the origin of evil

[1] *Last Pages from a Journal* (115), p. 156.

and ends with Christian eschatology. In *Doctrines of the Creed* he insists on the connexion between the truth concerning the atonement and the truth concerning man's ultimate destiny and expresses his feeling that "some classical treatises on the doctrine of the atonement are gravely incomplete, because they do not face the eschatological issues which are raised by the very nature of the doctrine itself." This omission he repairs both in that book and in his final work. In what follows I shall make use, without discrimination, of what he says in both these books. In them he affirms that the "*similitudo* of the divine image in man" consists in his "power of choice and of conscious control over things." "Sin is fundamentally the choice which affirms the finite independent self, its lordship and acquisitiveness, against love and obedience to God." Of that sin "the consequences are transmitted to every soul that is naturally born. Henceforth man's nature is marred." Quick's doctrine of the fall is not to be precisely identified with that either of the patristic or of the scholastic theologians; nor has it the rigour of Brunner's doctrine, still less of Barth's, in their revival of strict Reformation theology on this point. On none of these grounds is it to be regarded as necessarily unscriptural.

The saving work of God in Christ is viewed by Quick as a whole which has two indispersable parts. The first part is concerned with what Christ did by His death on the cross. This is interpreted, not exclusively but inclusively, in terms of sacrifice. Quick's examination of the various historical theories is extremely interesting, but I can refer only to his final judgment upon juridical—that is, Anselmic-Reformation—theories. With regard to them he says, "Christ in His perfect holiness did indeed voluntarily undergo the shameful death which was the penalty of sin. But the avail of that death is due less to any supposed 'transference of merit' than to the very fact that by thus dying Christ changed penalty into sacrifice and shame into glory, and by His risen life enables His faithful followers to do the same." Quick's standpoint is substantially the same as that so ably presented by Dr Vincent Taylor in his three volumes of New Testament studies of the work of Christ. The other element in his soteriology is the significance of the resurrection, with the eschatological issues that take their rise from it as well as from the cross. "The atonement of the cross would not be complete apart from the resurrection." What this means for him is presented in a passage of great power and beauty in his final work, from which I quote the opening sentences: "But the Christian eschatology of resurrection and sacrifice is not an eschatology only for individuals nor even only for the human race. It is also a gospel of world-redemption and world-salvation, i.e. of the new world which Christ's resurrection has inaugurated. The sufferings, death, and completed sacrifice of Christ issue in something much more than His own resurrection to glory; they are the foundation of God's redeemed and recreated universe which the living Christ, in His deity begotten before all worlds and in His manhood the first-born of the new world, enables men to enter by the following of himself in faith." That this Gospel involves the salvation of every soul he is not prepared to affirm. Two principles must be firmly held on the grounds of the Christian revela-

tion: "(1) God's creative and redemptive goodness must in all things be finally triumphant. (2) Every soul of man has an eternal destiny which must for good or for evil be decided by its own responsible choice within a limited time." Recognizing here the limits of our knowledge and our logic, he inclines to the belief that if any are lost "death and not life of any kind" is their doom. His last words are, "existent and persistent evil must somehow be absolutely excluded from the universe in which God's whole purpose is wholly fulfilled."

Both in *Essays in Orthodoxy* and in *Doctrines of the Creed* Quick expounds various aspects of the theology of the Holy Spirit. In the earlier book he deals at some length with the doctrine of the Trinity, and after an examination of the historic Greek and Latin formulæ attempts a translation of them in terms of "dynamic life and personal activity." So he speaks of the life of God, "the one Perfect Personality," as operating and revealing itself "through three distinct Activities." From any suspicion of a Sabellian notion of modes of revelation and nothing more he safeguards himself in the following sentence: "Since each of the Activities has in itself the fullness of the love, wisdom and power of God, each is by itself fully personal, yet are all Three contained in the One Personal Life."

In the development of Quick's thought on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit there is a consistent fidelity to the New Testament which is not always forthcoming in writings concerned with this subject. He was conscious of the need for a more adequate presentation of the doctrine. "It may be," he suggests, "that one of the chief tasks of the theologian to-day is to go back to the New Testament and seek to re-interpret the apostolic message concerning the Holy Spirit's work." It is no small contribution that he himself makes, not least in his discussion of " spiritual religion " as it is understood by some who see in it a contrast with the historic Christian emphasis upon the revelation in Christ and upon the special and supernatural *koinonia* of the Holy Spirit in the Church. As to the former insistence Quick, while finding a partial, dim, apprehension and revelation of God "in every quest and achievement of the human spirit," and thus placing himself in opposition to the current of strong anti-humanism which runs through not a little of contemporary theology, maintains that "apart from the life of Jesus the eternal Word is apprehended apart from his own great and final self-revealing act"; and of Jesus the Holy Spirit is the interpreter. In respect of the objection to belief in a particular association of the Spirit with the Church, Quick takes the discussion on to the high places of God's purpose in history and the place of the Church therein. There is the exclusive side: "only in the Christian community is that operation of the Holy Spirit found which derives full redeeming power from the incarnation and the cross of Christ." But the Church is "potentially all-inclusive also. For there is nothing in nature which cannot in the Church's fellowship be made into a holy and acceptable offering to God." Worthy of close attention is all that he writes on "the spiritual nature of the Church as constituted by the Koinonia of the Holy Spirit."

Quick, in the preface to *The Christian Sacraments*, spoke of his book as

an "essay in the philosophy of sacraments," and in this lies the explanation of its form and order. It is probable that many readers found the opening chapters difficult, especially the discussion of significance and instrumentality. But except on the basis of disbelief in the value of any analytic work on the general subject of sacramentalism, and in the possibility of philosophical notions throwing any light upon *Christian* sacraments, Quick's method of approach is, at least, a legitimate one. Of the excellence of these chapters in themselves there could be no question; they display, more perhaps than anything else he wrote, his mastery of ideas and his ability in the presentation of them. The detailed consideration of the sacraments has as its background a discussion of the life of Christ as a Sacrament with reference first to the incarnation then to the atonement. The theological implications of the conclusions of earlier chapters are summed up in his teaching that while the life and death of Christ "considered as the instrument of God's power are seen as unique among all the events of time," they "sum up in themselves and interpret the ultimate significance and value of the temporal process as a whole, and also are the visible embodiment of the power by which the process is directed to its end."

One of the merits of Quick's method of approach to particular sacraments is that it does much to illuminate the idea of a sacrament as a sign or symbol and thereby to draw the sting of controversy. Three statements he makes are highly relevant. In the first he writes, "we have now to consider how a clear view of the double aspect of Christian sacraments, as representative and effective, may enable us to correct the main aberrations into which Sacramental doctrine and practice have strayed, and to meet the objections of opponents which these aberrations have provoked." Later, when he is considering eucharistic doctrine, he deals with the limitations of symbolism and expresses himself positively as follows: "from the beginning a sacrament is in principle something more than a sign of any kind, more even than an effectual sign, if by that term we denote something which can only be effectual as a sign, or which is wholly dependent upon its significance for its effect. A sacrament is actually an instrument whereby God's power operates upon us, not solely through the medium of a meaning apprehended by our minds." And the final consequence appears when shortly afterwards he writes, "both instrumentality and significance or expressiveness are fundamental constituents of sacramental being, and neither must be made simply adjectival to the other."

The doctrinal exposition and argument in connexion with Baptism and the Eucharist succeed a chapter entitled "The Church, Orders and Unity." He treats this subject both here and at the end of *Doctrines of the Creed*, and of the two discussions this earlier one seems to me the more satisfactory. The problems which centre in words and phrases such as "validity" and "efficacy," "the Church visible and the Church invisible"; the different views taken of the relation between the Church and the Sacraments, according as the Cyprianic or Augustinian conception is accepted, with their reactions upon the subject of schism; the bearing of the conclusions upon Christian reunion—all these

matters are examined, and the reasons for the positions which Quick himself adopts are clearly stated. Feeling deeply the importance of the conception of validity, he affirms also a doctrine of degrees of validity. He holds that "we should regard practically all the divisions of Christendom as being in principle schisms within the Church." He is particularly averse from the notion that on the basis of a judgment as to the validity or non-validity of its Orders it can be decided whether any particular body of Christians is or is not within the visible Church. The deciding factor is, as his later book makes plain, the maintenance of the Christian faith. The whole argument is a persuasive statement of one point of view; but at his most characteristic Quick gives a good deal more than that.

His doctrine of Baptism, in which the symbolic not the instrumental aspect of the sacrament holds first place, is affected by the stress he lays on the change from adult baptism to infant baptism. The symbolism as he expounds it is very far-reaching and inclusive, and it is certainly true that on any interpretation Baptism symbolizes more than it effects. But I think that Quick is influenced too much by his dissatisfaction with the dominant conception of the relation of Baptism to original sin. Of this he says "what cannot at all be verified in experience is the supposition that Baptism in itself makes any such change in the spiritual condition of an infant as is implied by asserting that it removes once for all original sin and its hold on the soul." It is not irrelevant to remark that, as far as I am aware, no theologian has ever suggested the possibility of such a verification in experience. Greater stress upon the fact, which he affirms, that Baptism initiates a process in the person baptized, which is obviously the process of the spiritual life, would have led to a truer balance than that which appears in the statement that "we must not allow the instrumental to be wholly absorbed into the symbolic."

Quick's discussion of eucharistic theology has that peculiarly penetrating quality which may be observed when his subject is Christology or the doctrine of Salvation. An element of controversy inevitably enters in; yet in the positive and constructive development of the thought that element is less than secondary. That applies to what he writes as to both the eucharistic sacrifice and the presence of Christ. The former he affirms in that the Eucharist "is the perpetual externalisation in human ritual of the self-offering of Christ, which was once for all in fact externalised on Calvary, but is ever real in the inward and heavenly sphere"; and in the eucharistic action there is an expressive symbolization of "the reality of Christ's death and self-immolation upon the Cross. The symbolization of a past fact, if it be truly expressive, must always in some sense bridge the gulf of time, make the past present and actually *convey* the reality of that which it commemorates." Language such as this does not clear away all difficulties; and the word "offering" itself is one which needs at least the most careful examination in the phrase, "we make before God an offering which is one with Christ's present and eternal offering of Himself." But if the activity of the Lord's heavenly life is rightly thus described, that need not involve, and Quick is quite clear that it ought not to involve,

any supposition "that Christ is immolated in the Eucharist in any other manner than by the representation of His death." And he quotes words of St Thomas Aquinas, "the celebration of this Sacrament is an image representing Christ's Passion, which is His true immolation."

In his conception of the nature of Christ's presence in the Eucharist Quick lays special stress on what the elements become in the context of the rite. "It may be true to say," he affirms, "that the presence resides in what is done with the elements rather than in the elements themselves, if it be remembered that in the process of that action the elements are more than merely the instruments of a living spirit beyond them and become actually the expression of the life of that spirit itself." So he can willingly accept "the statement that the bread and wine are changed so as to become the Body and Blood of Christ, if it be understood that the terms body and blood denote, not material things as such, but outward things as they are in relation to all spiritual activity which operates and expresses itself through them." The mode of presence is, for him, spiritual rather than substantial, not a presence with or in "the things or physical objects *as such*," but one that comes "through the objects as they are used in the action of the Eucharistic rite." His language is not far removed from the old virtualistic doctrine when he speaks of the "change wrought in the bread and wine" as "sufficiently represented as a change of use and meaning"; and will not assert "a change in the physical objects as such." It is obvious that, holding a doctrine of this kind, he could not look favourably on the practice of extra-liturgical devotions, the eucharistic meaning being confined to the eucharistic rite and action, though that does not preclude reservation for the sick; the communion of them is in reality simply "a postponed part of the Eucharistic act."

I do not think his doctrine should be described as virtualist if it is taken as a whole. The connexion between the presence of Christ and the consecrated elements is closer, more "real" than virtualism allowed. But undoubtedly Quick did not think along the lines of the formula which declares that the Body and Blood of Christ are present in or under the species of bread and wine. His insistence, in his whole sacramental philosophy, upon significance and instrumentality leads to a different way of describing the eucharistic presence, while as to any connexion of "divine presence objectively with outward or material things," that he holds to be "in principle wrong . . . apart from the two relations of expression and instrumentality." And we shall not appreciate the character of his teaching on the eucharistic presence unless we take note of his belief that "whatever is the organ of Christ's activity is, so far, His Body," and of his suggestion that "ultimately, when God's purpose in creation has been finally fulfilled, the Body of Christ is the sum of created things." These are words which, whether we can exactly make them our own or not, express a profound conception of the end of all God's manifold work in creation and redemption.

So I bring to an end this attempt to give some account of the main features of Oliver Quick's theology. Those who have any real acquaintance with it will feel, as those who enjoyed his friendship knew so well, that in it there is revealed a complete intellectual

sincerity, a deep sense of responsibility in the use of words, and that freedom from anything of the nature of personal display which marks a character of singular purity. He was not grandly impressive after the manner of von Hügel and Forsyth, and he had not accumulated those vast stores of knowledge which we associate with such of his contemporaries as H. R. Mackintosh and N. P. Williams. But as an expounder of the essentials of Christian orthodoxy he was second to none. Orthodoxy, right thinking about God's revealing and redeeming activity in Christ, was for him both the end in which the intellect could find satisfaction and the starting-point from which it could advance to a discernment of the meaning and purpose of all that is. What he saw so clearly himself, that he sought continuously to make clear to others; and the fruit of the light within him is the light which he has shed.

J. K. Mozley.

(*Concluded.*)

The Church and the Artist

No one, I imagine, would deny that the present relations between art and Christianity are unsatisfactory. Certainly the creative artist does not find that he can speak sufficiently freely within the material walls of the church, or even within the immaterial boundaries of religion, to express himself satisfactorily. And (but here I am on less familiar ground) I have the impression that the Church hesitates to make use of the creative artist either because it mistrusts his ability to interpret religion, or because it conceives that the visual arts are no longer, in a scientific age, capable of serving the Church to-day as they served it in the past. True, one or two churchmen, greatly daring, have recently made an enlightened gesture by commissioning a truly creative painter or sculptor to execute an isolated work. But these events are too exceptional to be considered even as pointers towards a revival of the old and extremely satisfactory collaboration between employer and employee.

When employer and employee part company, as the Church and the artist are now virtually parted in England, it is no use appealing to the employer's sense of duty to renew the old contract out of pity for the unemployed. Nor is it much use suggesting that a course of education would give the Church a taste for more and better art. The manufacturer needs no course of lectures in æsthetics to convince him of the usefulness of the poster as an essential part of the machinery of salesmanship. He may buy a bad poster, but he is not content with one that is out of date. The contemporary artist is a person he cannot do without.

At present, the Church, as patron, manages to do very well without him. Not that it has abandoned the use of the traditional objects, from altar candlesticks to statues, that have always been part of the furniture of churches, but that it has ceased to regard them as anything more than furniture. It insists that the symbol should be present, but it has forgotten that a symbol must be alive in order to be potent; that it

must be renewed, as it has always been renewed, by constant doses of the contemporary spirit.

I am aware that in making this plea for more courage on the part of the Church to use the contemporary artist as its salesman I am approaching the frontier where theology meets modern art from the wrong direction. But I can only approach that frontier from the direction in which my own home lies. Frankly, my reason for wanting the Church to be courageous is mainly in order that the artist should be given a chance to interpret the deeper levels of human experience, thereby giving art a deeper set of potentialities.

That, perhaps, is a cart-before-the-horse approach to the problem. It is as though I were to plead with the manufacturer for better posters merely because I like good posters. But if it is true that better posters produce bigger sales, the manufacturer need not complain that I have put the cart before the horse. Cart and horse can, for my purpose, be regarded as a unity which has somehow been split in two. The horse is grazing happily, but rather uselessly, somewhere in the vicinity, while the cart is losing the momentum it had when the horse was firmly between the shafts. And now there is a danger of its stopping altogether.

The moment is surely a good one for uniting them again. Art no longer suffers from the disability that attacked it in the late nineteenth century—the incapacity to see below the surface. The artist of to-day does deal in symbolism rather than in description. But the power to invent symbols must be canalized or the resultant work of art tends to be incomprehensible. All symbols are, in a broad sense, religious in that they speak of the hidden life, the non-material world. But, left to himself, the artist has no alternative but to paint his private religion, whereas the real power of the religion-art partnership lies in its capacity to interpret group-consciousness. It is there that the artist can function most completely. Given a minimum of theological concepts and a wide but accepted set of themes, he can double the power of his symbolism by directing it into the old, the well-worn channel.

It may well occur to the churchman at this point in the argument, that even if the artist is willing to do so his sincerity may be open to question; that he may be using rather than serving the Church; that if he wants to express what I have called his "private religion" he is not an orthodox Christian and is therefore an unsuitable person to employ on a form of art which must be worthless if it is not Christian in the strictest sense of the word.

To that objection I have no authoritative reply. My instinctive rejoinder is that the kind of spiritual experience which I find translated into visual terms by a small but increasing group of twentieth-century artists is fundamentally Christian. I am convinced that modern art, having shaken off the rather cynical reasonableness of the eighteenth and the materialism of the nineteenth centuries, is well equipped to forge a set of symbols—different, of course, from the symbols of medieval Christianity, but none the less real—that will interpret the attitude of the Christian Church to the modern world.

Symbolism has two sets of roots. One is conventional and invariable;

it does no more than "stand for" the concept symbolized. The other expresses its inventor's attitude to the concept and is therefore an index of the artist's power to interpret. Thus, an anchor "stands for" Hope, and as long as it is recognizably an anchor nothing can add to or detract from its potency. But a picture of a dim figure crouched over a broken lyre is an interpretation whose potency depends partly on the quality of the artist's imagination and partly on the spectator's receptivity; and that, in its turn, depends on how far the artist belongs to his age. Watts, to-day, has lost much of his grip as a symbolist because the *zeitgeist* has shifted since his day. To us, his interpretation has inevitably lost some of its validity.

To an even greater extent the mass-produced church furniture of to-day, based largely on Ghiberti and Fra Angelico with an admixture of sugar, is invalid. But the Church, it appears, is not thinking in terms of validity. The Fra Angelico formula is acceptable because it is old enough and familiar enough to have lost almost all its force. It has transferred itself from the interpretive to the conventional class. It is therefore safe but almost meaningless. It "stands for" a concept, but leaves it unilluminated.

In such a situation, where an essential continuity has been broken, two steps have to be taken before continuity can be re-established. The Church must decide that outworn symbols, though not, perhaps, actively harmful, are useless. And the artist must realize that complete freedom, however desirable æsthetically, robs him of one of the most valuable factors of movement—namely, *direction.* Both steps are very difficult to take. The horse has developed a taste for wandering at will, unhindered by shafts. The cart is satisfied that it does not cease to be a cart even though it has ceased to move.

How these two inertias are to be broken down I do not know. But my impression is that the Church's inertia is more obstinate than the artist's. For whereas the Church has lost confidence in the artist *qua* artist, the artist has merely lost confidence in himself in relation to the particular job of interpreting Christianity. A Henry Moore, embarking on a Madonna and Child, has to do a good deal more pondering than a Donatello. That again is largely a question of lost momentum.

But the Church has hardly even begun to ponder. To the Church, the creative artist is a man who has ceased to speak in a recognizably religious idiom. It cannot see the connection between Donatello and Henry Moore, between Masaccio and Stanley Spencer, because the thread that connects them happens to have strayed outside the Church into a region with which it is unfamiliar.

That unfamiliarity is not quite to be broken down by education. I have suggested that "courage" is the necessary quality. It *is* necessary, though, of course, it must be qualified by discrimination. But that discrimination must not be used in the wrong direction. The artist's æsthetic idiom, for example, is his own concern. It is as much a part of him as his handwriting and to interfere with it is equivalent to inviting him to practise forgery. Being a specialist in æsthetics, the artist must surely be allowed to dictate his own æsthetic terms to the Church, just as the Church, on its side, must dictate subject-matter to

the artist. If the Church doubts the validity of any given artist's language, there are always experts who can be consulted. It is on the middle ground, on the question of symbolic interpretation, that the two must meet and exchange views, thereby inevitably educating each other.

One thing is certain. The initiative lies with the Church. The horse will never squeeze himself between the shafts unbidden.

LONDON. ERIC NEWTON.

A Note on Basic English

"BASIC" is a skilfully constructed artificial language, intended in the first instance to facilitate British and American commerce. It consists of 850 words, which may be combined to form a great many more words. Its outstanding characteristic is that it practically dispenses with verbs; only 16 are left—*give*, *get*, *take*, *put*, *come*, *go*, *keep*, *let*, *make*, *say*, *see*, *send*, *do*, *have*, *been*, *seem*, with the auxiliaries *may* and *will*—18 in all. Note that you cannot "ask" in Basic, but must "put a question"; you cannot "know," only "have knowledge." Basic has been guardedly approved by the Government, which has entrusted its development to the British Council.

The recent publication of *The New Testament in Basic English* has brought to the front the possibility of using Basic for theological books. Let it be said at once that it is an amazingly successful attempt to overcome self-imposed limitations. A few examples of its limitations may be given. What simpler English can be found than Matt. vii, 7? "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." This by the rules has to become: "Make a request, and it will be answered; what you are searching for you will get; and to him who gives the sign, the door will be opened." ("Search" is one of 150 words added to the 850, to make a Bible translation possible.) Matt. vii, 22: "A great number will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, were we not prophets in your name?" (It may be asked whether any foreigner able to learn our language would not grasp the meaning of the verb "prophesy" from the noun "prophet.") In John xxi, 16, "thou knowest that I love thee" becomes "you have knowledge that you are dear to me"—you can't "know" or "love" in Basic. A remarkable instance is found in Acts xxviii, 31, where A.V. translates ἀκωλύτως by "no man forbidding him"—"without hindrance" would be closer, but less euphonious after "with all confidence." Basic has "and no orders were given that he was not to do so," which is intolerably clumsy. Even more remarkable is the rendering of 1 Cor. xv, 4 (ὅτι ἐτάφη καὶ ὅτι ἐγήγερται τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ): "was . . . buried, the third day he rose again from the dead," in the words of the Creed. This in Basic is "he was put in the place of the dead; and on the third day he came back from the dead." A language which cannot speak of burial is indeed defective, and "he came back from the dead" misses the meaning of the Greek passive, which teaches that God raised Jesus.

It may be mentioned that S.P.C.K. published a full-length commentary on the Bible some six years ago, intended for Africans, and written

in Basic. A home theological college adopted it as a textbook, whereas the students of a West African college repudiated it as an insulting writing down to their supposed level. This suggests what is a grave drawback to the use of Basic in the Empire. African citizens of the Empire claim the right to speak the *King's* English, and not to be put off with an inferior substitute. Recent evidence shows that the spread of Basic in British Africa is due to a desire to take the first step; those who are learning it intend to discard it as soon as possible in favour of a richer form of English.

The dilemma in Africa is acute. The French aim at turning their African subjects into black Frenchmen, able to speak idiomatic French. The Portuguese insist that British and American missionaries should teach primitive African tribes in Portuguese; if the vernacular is used, then the Portuguese version must face it on the opposite page. But this is part of a consistent policy in which the colour bar as known in British Africa hardly exists. Portuguese officials freely marry native wives and a mixed race is growing up, as in Goa. Our best officials have been anxious to keep British and African cultures separate, to encourage indirect rule by working through the chiefs, and to encourage vernacular literature. If this policy is weakening, it is due to the insistence of Africans, who look with suspicion on methods which retard their development. The intellectual strain on village children in East Africa, who begin with their own dialect, go on to the *lingua franca* (Swahili), and are taught in English in the higher forms, is very great. Imagine an English child *taught in* his mother-tongue in the kindergarten, *in* French in the Junior School, and *in* Arabic in the Senior, and you get some idea of what it must mean. The tendency to drop the intermediate stage and make English the universal medium may prove irresistible. But we are preparing a grave problem for the future if we produce an African population initiated into English culture but economically helots and shut off by racial prejudice from the white members of the Empire.

When we consider theological education in Africa it is clear that Basic is the worst possible medium. The vernacular has its drawbacks, but at least in all the main languages it has the Bible, that wonderful book with its wealth of literary forms. It has the Old Testament, much of which goes easily into African languages. They, like Hebrew, have a rich store of verbs, which wonderfully express the activities of the living God. God is a God of action, which needs verbs to be properly expressed. Higher education must be given, in British colonies, in English, for it is impracticable to produce textbooks for a small group of students in each language-area. But Basic is such an impoverished language that the full meanings of theology cannot be conveyed. An instructive story comes from Sierra Leone. A missionary in the Mende-speaking area heard her girls, who had been taught Basic, discussing the two languages; they concluded that English was a poor language, because it could not convey shades of meaning in the way Mende does.

English has a great future as the second language of a large part of the world. Already in India a conference of North and South to

protest against the iniquities of British rule must be conducted in English. The influence of the United States in the Far East ensures the spread of English there. It has no rival so far as we can see. Anything like Basic French or German seems impossible. Two concluding thoughts arise. The readiness of foreigners to learn English may well lead to mental laziness on the part of those to whom it is their native language and an ultimate passing of intellectual pre-eminence to those who are forced to learn a foreign language. More serious is the thought that English cynicism, shallowness, and pornography will spread at least as readily as our finer literature. The responsibility of authors and publishers in the post-war years will be very great.

W. K. Lowther Clarke.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Divine Realm. By Evgueny Lampert. Faber and Faber. 8s. 6d.

Dr Lampert presents this book to us as "an introduction to the theology of the sacraments, a discussion of the fundamental religious and philosophical premises of sacramental theology." He contends that this "has generally drawn less attention to itself than the doctrines of the various sacraments." He divides his essay into three parts: (i) God and the World, (ii) the Divine Realm—meaning, roughly, material existence, (iii) the Sacrament. This last part is therefore the cause as well as the conclusion of his writing. But the others are necessary.

It is necessary, for example, before the sacramental can be considered, to recapitulate the right relation of the universe to God. This, of course, is simply that that relation is (*a*) wholly one-sided, (*b*) fundamentally two-sided. Dr Lampert says: "In virtue of its inclusion into being, 'nothingness' becomes the very ground of the creature in its self-existence." He adds that "all that lives knows the temptation to metaphysical suicide, a longing to escape the fiery wheel of being." This temptation (real as it is) is, however, like all temptations, a longing for an impossibility (Hell itself is, I suppose, nothing but an obstinate and everlasting effort to establish an impossibility). And the more intense the longing to be uncreatured, the more vivid the characteristic of the creature.

The creature, then, being from nothing, finds itself in relation. It is precisely created in relation. Man's "very manhood and creatureliness is this: to be related to God." This relation reaches to and includes man's corporeity, for that corporeity is not accidental and transient but essential and (in some sense) eternal. The Incarnation is in the glory of God. "Corporeity must have, and indeed has, its absolute mode of being in the triune life of God." The incarnate life was conditioned by the perverse longing of the creature against proper relation. That the glory of the corporeity should endure this was its agony and yet (might one say so) a redoubled glory. But it also renewed in the human body the possibility of being identified with that glory. "The

good tidings of Christianity are a witness and prophecy of just this absolute significance of the body."

This body exists in a symbolic universe. All matter presents—say, re-presents—spiritual facts. All Nature is, in this sense, sacramental but it is a limited sacramentalism. "The difference between the sacrament and the symbol lies first of all in that the former is something *singled out*, and *set apart*, notwithstanding its absolutely universal character. The symbolic power of nature as such does not as yet create the sacrament. . . . The integration of nature is constantly realized in the sacrament." Nature has indeed to be constantly re-integrated; creaturely existence is renewed in its full meaning and its possibilities; indeed, in its full actualities at those points where God takes up "a single fragment of creaturely being" and makes it "the place of His utmost presence." Dr Lampert makes this clear by a brief discussion of the place of water in baptism. He proceeds to a discussion on metabolism, which denotes "the identity of the different and the difference of the identical—a true antinomic miracle." "The miracle of sacramental metabolism, or translation . . . is not a physical but a metaphysical event." This exposition brings us to the central Sacrament Itself. I do not know whether Dr Lampert would think it true to say that the elements in That, the bread and wine, which were once capable of supporting and nourishing the human body, now become capable of supporting and nourishing the whole human organism, body and soul in their single identity. They are (in a word used, he tells us, by the Eastern Fathers) "transferred"; they belong to divine life. But it is, of course, divine life as it determined itself to exist in relation to this creation.

There follow two very fine chapters on the Epiklesis and on the Ultimacy of the Sacrament. "The Sacrament is in effect the anticipation of the transfigured cosmos of the age to come. . . . The power of the sacrament, though realized within the human and cosmic world of untransfigured nature, *transcends* the limits of this age and reaches out to the world to come: for the sacrament itself is this supreme *transcensus*. It is an eternal witness to the ultimate destiny of the created universe. The transcendent power of God is already present in the world, that this world may be finally redeemed and transfigured."

This is the power of the Gospel against all gnosticisms and all matter-despising pieties. There are things in Dr Lampert's work to which I should mildly demur; there are others which may be disputed by the theologians. But as a whole it seems to me a very notable and desirable statement of a point of view not yet sufficiently realized, but precisely native to the Gospel and characterizing it alone among all the religions of earth.

CHARLES WILLIAMS.

OXFORD.

THE GOSPEL OF THE NEW WORLD. By Oliver C. Quick. With a Memoir by the (late) Archbishop of Canterbury. Nisbet. 6s. 6d.

This excellent little book contains Canon Quick's last lectures at Oxford. They expound the Christian doctrines of sin and redemption.

The author believed that, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the life of the world to come—the new world—is already in some measure present in the Church. This thoroughly biblical and exciting conviction, so hard to hold in face of the sad spectacle of Christendom, so impossible to part with if the New Testament is to be kept, kindles the whole book.

Canon Quick examines various theories of evil, and concludes that its origin must be sought in the perverted will. It cannot therefore be cured unless the will is renewed and healed. The Hebrew prophets understood its origin but could not proclaim its cure. Although they knew that evil was rooted in the will, and endeavoured "to substitute in the chosen people the noble sense of guilt for the ignoble sense of grievance which was distorting their notions of God," they had no real doctrine of grace, no message of "a present divine power which would change man's heart and strengthen his will for righteousness." This is just what the New Testament supplies. The resurrection of Christ is regarded as a cosmic event, the beginning of a new world, the release of a new life which initiates a transformation of man's whole being.

The author shows how this bright conviction of the primitive Church was obscured when the world invaded the tiny society, and the Church became—Christendom. How hard, throughout the Middle Ages and at the Reformation, to believe that the life of the world to come was pulsing through the veins of the Church! How natural, then, that the theories of the atonement developed by medieval theologians and by the Reformers should be concerned with the forgiveness of sins and omit, or postpone until after death, the renewal of the will.

"What has been lost is the directly eschatological reference of the Atonement which is conspicuous in primitive Christianity. In other words, what we need to recover is the perception that the atonement has not really been effected at all apart from the resurrection of Jesus Christ which is itself the inauguration of the new world, and by which the life of the world to come is already communicated to faithful Christians."

A. C. Scupholme.

Ugthorpe.

Celibacy and Marriage—A Study in Clerical Vocation. By H. R. T. Brandreth and Sherwin Bailey. (Theology Occasional Papers: New series, No. 7.) 2s.

The authors of this book, one of whom is a celibate and the other a married priest, have attempted in two essays to give some guidance to ordinands and young priests in coming to a right decision on the question whether or not to marry. The English clergy have to bear a weight of personal responsibility in this matter which is quite foreign to their brother priests of the Roman or Orthodox traditions, for whom the matter is settled by Church Law; and it is well known that the rightness or otherwise of a man's judgment in this matter may have a lasting effect for good or ill on his ministry.

The authors share the belief that there is a place in the English

Church for the married and the celibate priest alike. Realizing the harm which has come to men's souls both from an easy-going bachelordom which the world mistakes for celibacy and from hasty or unsuitable marriage, they plead that both estates should be treated from the first as definite vocations to a personal, positive relationship with God and approached with this fact in mind. If we venture to doubt whether, in the present condition of English society, with its tradition of relatively late marriage, it is possible or desirable for the average ordinand to come to a decision on this matter at so early an age as the authors appear to envisage, this is not to deny that the book represents a most valuable attempt to find a right solution to the problem.

Fr Brandreth rightly desires that aspirants to the celibate life should be trained in parishes where the incumbent is himself a celibate. He suggests that they should be admitted on a probationary basis to some such society as the Oratory of the Good Shepherd or the Society of the Holy Ghost, with a view, after testing, to taking celibate vows. It is difficult, perhaps, to understand his objection to dispensation from such vows in necessary cases. It is clearly desirable that if rules for dispensation exist they should be upheld by the hierarchy and should be uniform throughout the Church; there would be endless misunderstanding if the "ex-celibate" was regarded as a priest in good standing in one diocese and as a technically "scandalous cleric" in another. It is unlikely that the English Episcopate as a whole at the present time would be prepared to support permanent vows without possibility of dispensation; whereas they might give sympathetic consideration to a scheme of temporary vows (of course with a life intention) periodically renewable, or to more permanent vows which left a door open for dispensation in cases where clearly a mistake had been made.

Fr Bailey treats of the vocation of the married priest and his problems in a refreshingly original way. Perhaps by design he says nothing about the inadequacy of the ordinary parochial endowments of to-day to allow a priest's family life to be lived on the traditional scale of the last century. This is a problem which must be faced; but it is more a responsibility for those layfolk who desire married clergy than for the priest himself. The most valuable part of this essay is in the early pages, where the author deals with the nature and theology of marriage as such. This, as he says, applies equally to the layman as to the priest; and we venture to suggest that, detached from its present context and a little simplified in language, it might make a useful popular tract for the parish priest to distribute among his younger folk.

In conclusion we would say that this book will be read with profit by all candidates for Holy Orders and should be of great service to those who have the charge of the spiritual formation and training of such men. With all humility, too, we would commend it to the members of the Episcopal Bench; their most august function is to be the begetters of spiritual sons in the priesthood, and this book should be of real help to them in the discharge of this responsible duty.

MIRFIELD. ANDREW BLAIR, C.R.

THE UNKNOWN STATE. Riddell Memorial Lectures delivered before the University of Durham by Lord Eustace Percy. Oxford University Press. 2s. 6d.

These lectures are to be welcomed. We are being continually reminded of the gravity of the crisis through which we are passing, but there are not many who have challenged the political crisis of to-day with such forcible arguments as Lord Eustace Percy does.

The special merit of these lectures is that they plead for revival of the neglected study of government. This plea may not be in conformity with the spirit of the age. But it is urgent. For it cannot be denied that in the course of the last century, especially in the Anglo-Saxon countries, the study of government has been neglected in favour of the study of the rather vague entity called "society." It is hardly an overstatement to maintain that, on the whole, Western political theory is a theory of society—*i.e.*, a theory according to which society is the central conception, wider than the state, which is simply considered the organ or instrument of society. But as far as I can see the concept of society itself has as yet not been satisfactorily dealt with. True, society has not lost in the Anglo-Saxon countries its underlying *political* meaning as is the case on the Continent. But beyond that the misunderstandings as to the more exact content of this concept have not been cleared up. These lectures prove this. In accordance with a widely spread view the author defines a society "simply as a number of human beings living in a certain degree of geographical contiguity." If this be the case society cannot be understood as that comprehensive organization which includes the state. For the state is "something more than the aggregate of the actions and interactions of its individual members" (p. 7). Therefore, either society is a community which stands for something more compact and united than the sum of intrinsically separate individuals packed together in a haphazard fashion (which is not the prevailing doctrine) or Lord Eustace Percy's conclusion that the study of government is the most urgent need of the day is well founded.

Of course, this does not mean that the state is an end in itself. The author is quite explicit in rejecting this doctrine. His aim is to develop a philosophy of government on a Christian basis and to apply this Christian philosophy of government to some of the practical issues of government to-day. I cannot mention all the questions raised in this connexion. I will only refer to two of them which are of special importance. First, there is the question of the Christian revelation to the Christian governor and the Christian citizen. Here it is made clear that in a Christian state which deserves the name it is not the letter but the spirit that matters in the observance of law and that Christians have higher duties than law can enforce. This spirit is defined as the spirit of self-renunciation and self-sacrifice which should be normalized and not substituted by the spirit of majority self-interest to which general elections and parliamentary debates continually appeal in modern democracy. Further, the author has convincingly shown how the characteristic defect of modern civilization finds its expression in a law which is concerned with things rather than with

human beings and in an administration which has taken over the function of law. Indeed it is the most urgent task of a Christian statesman to face this situation and to see to it that this impersonalization of human relationships and personal associations comes to an end. The revolution, therefore, we must advocate is "a reconsideration of law, a reconstruction of administration and a regeneration of the spirit of State policy."

G. Leibholz.

Oxford.

The Fire of the Lord. By Norman Nicholson. Nicholson and Watson. 9s. 6d.

The modern religious novel is apt to be an artificial product—unless, like the fiction of James Joyce and D. H. Lawrence, it is an uprush from the unconscious. Even Sigrid Undset is not quite an exception, and the modern religious novel in England, so far as it exists at all, is often a highly deliberated product. The present world war has seen quite a few of them—*The Keys of the Kingdom*, *If This Were True*, *All Glorious Within* and *The Fire of the Lord*, being all of them remarkable achievements; but Mr Norman Nicholson's is the only one of the batch that does not betray its mission—the only one about which the reader does not see, so to speak, the chicken before it comes out of the egg.

The scene is his native Cumberland; and we are told at the outset that the topography is not imaginary—though the characters are; but what is much more important than the topography is what can only be described as the theological integrity of Mr Nicholson's theme—the sowing and the reaping in this green little corner of God's world-wide harvest. It really is like a bird's-eye view of earth as seen from the awful and compassionate judgment seat of Heaven; but Mr Nicholson's handling of the theme would probably enable those with undeveloped prophetic instinct to see in it a story of no more than human significance—despite the fact that he has chosen for his pattern the cycle of fasts and festivals in the Christian year. There is plenty of conscious religion in the story—Harvest Thanksgiving, Christmas festivities, Papist conspiracies and a tin tabernacle; but only in language of the "vigorous, wayward, half-mad old evangelist, Benjamin Fell," does the book's true meaning occasionally explode.

The story concerns a handful of villagers—P. C. Crinkle—known to the village boys as "Twins," Maggie Birker, the vain little disturber of men's minds and flesh; and the young Elsie Holliwell—"as simple and good as green grass." The policeman is night-blind and the girl Elsie is deaf—minor infirmities without much significance in raw; but Elsie's deafness kept her innocent—the man's night-blindness played its part in the development of a stumbling character—both contributing to the judgment of Heaven upon a corner of the earth. It has often been said that the country-folk are more like animals than are townsfolk—that they live nearer to the earth. This may be so; but their moral perception, like that of a child, is often more simple and unblurred. Their reactions are more spontaneous—their characters uncooked; and the climax to which Mr Nicholson brings his little party at Holy Week and Easter reflects the cross and the ultimate

glory with a more prescient clarity than would have been possible had his characters inhabited the city instead of the plain.

The book has had forerunners. Sheila Kaye-Smith's earlier novels were not unlike it; but Mr Norman Nicholson has touched human life at a depth here to which few novelists of the countryside have penetrated since Hardy, and his story preserves a fine integrity—is entirely without the vice of "special pleading" that even Hardy allowed to break in and occasionally mar the integrity of his message. It is slightly built—as though its author feared, as well he might, that a heavier superstructure might crush all meaning out of the lesson here so delicately and dangerously exposed. No doubt he will produce what might be called "bigger" works in the future; but here he has given us a taste of life at the core—the kind of work that Donne or Racine might have chosen to execute had they lived in the twentieth century and had the novel been their medium.

ASHLEY SAMPSON.

SHORTER NOTICES

We have received the first two numbers of a new American periodical, entitled *Theology Today* (which can be obtained through the S.C.M. Press for 10s. per annum). It is published quarterly and edited by Dr John A. Mackay; each number contains 144 pages. Its aims are described as follows: "(1) To contribute to the restoration of theology in the world of today as the supreme science, of which both religion and culture stand in need for their renewal; (2) to study the central realities of Christian faith and life, and to set forth their meaning in clear and appropriate language; (3) to explore afresh the truths which were rediscovered by the Protestant Reformation, especially the tradition usually called Reformed, and to show their relevancy to the contemporary problems of the Church and society." The first two numbers justify the hope that this periodical will provide a useful means of keeping in touch with what is best in American Protestant thought.

A. R. V.

HOME, COMMUNITY AND CHURCH. S.C.M. Press. 1s. 3d.

THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH. By T. H. D. Edwards. Published by a Group of Northern Ministers. 6d.

WE SHALL RE-BUILD. By George Macleod. Iona Community. 2s. 6d.

Home, Community and Church is the report presented to the General Assembly of the Established Church of Scotland in May, 1944, by the Commission for the Interpretation of God's Will in the Present Crisis. Like the previous reports that have been presented by this Commission, it is of a high standard. The first section deals with "Marriage and the Family" and the second with "Social and Industrial Life." While conditions in Scotland are naturally kept in view, most of what is said is applicable elsewhere. The third section deals with "The Organisation of the Church's Life." This may be of particular interest to non-Presbyterians, because it propounds a plan for the introduction of "Permanent Moderators of Synods," who would be responsible for

personal supervision of the work of the Church in the area allotted to them. It is suggested that Scotland should be divided into thirteen areas for the purpose. There is no indication that this plan is thought to open an approach to a non-episcopal form of Church order, though it is acknowledged to "involve a radical change in the law and practice of the Church."

Much more promising, in this connexion, is Mr Edwards' paper, which indicates a readiness on the part of some ministers of the Presbyterian Church of England to rethink questions of Faith and Order, including episcopacy, in theological terms and even, we might say, to forward an Oxford Movement in Nonconformity. He deals boldly with several controversial subjects, and the pamphlet might profitably be discussed by Ministers' Fraternals, etc. Copies can be obtained from the Rev. H. B. Barrow, The Manse, Blyth, Northumberland.

Dr George Macleod's *We shall Re-build* (140 pp.) is the fullest account available of the work and aims of the Iona Community. It will explain the secret of the Community's appeal, and also the grounds on which it is regarded with suspicion in Scotland.

A. R. V.

A Book of Occasional Services. S.P.C.K. (n.p.)

This book, containing liturgical services for a variety of occasions not provided for in the Book of Common Prayer, is published under the authority of the General Synod of the Church of England in Australia and Tasmania. It follows the familiar lines of such works as the Oxford Diocesan Service Book, from which considerable sections have been drawn. But there is enough new and valuable material to make it a useful addition to the pile of manuals which collect upon the present-day reading desk. The Form of Reception into the Church of England of those who have been members of some other communion will be found useful on what in the absence of such provision can prove embarrassing occasions. It would be well that English assistant curates should, like their Australian brethren, be officially welcomed in the parish church as well as in the parish hall. The provision of an official Memorial Service is much to be commended, since such services, for which there is an increasing demand, are apt, when left to the tender mercies of all and sundry, to sink to a merely sentimental and even a sub-Christian level. There is provision for specifically Australian observances—the commemoration of the foundation of the Commonwealth and of the first Christian service held in Australia and Anzac Day—but the services in this section could be adapted to similar observances in England. In general the book seems as good and complete as anything of its kind that has yet been produced and has the additional advantage of being extremely compact in format.

Neston-in-Wirral. Frank Bennett.

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